

Asheville City Council
Planning and Economic Development Committee

2:00 p.m., June 10, 2009
Economic Development Office Conference Room

Minutes

Present: Councilwoman Robin Cape, Chair; Vice-Mayor Jan Davis

Staff: Gary Jackson, Sam Powers, Judy Daniel, Nikki Reid, Stephanie Monson, Ben Durant, Cathy Ball, Bob Oast

The Planning and Economic Development Committee met on June 10, 2009, at 29 Haywood Street. Chair Cape called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes from the May 13, 2009, meeting were approved as written.

2. Updates

Asheville City Market

Stephanie Monson, Urban Planner with the Office of Economic Development and city liaison to the City Market oversight committee, gave the update. The Asheville City Market is doing very well; sales figures from the first two weeks were higher than last year, and averaged \$17,000 in sales. A future step for the market is identified in the Downtown Master Plan, which is a long-term goal of finding a permanent home for the market. The Memorandum signed last year is good for three years. Chair Cape expressed her support for the market as a way of engaging the community, supporting the local economy and acting as a downtown magnet. Vice-Mayor Davis commented that it was important to look at the long-term when considering where it goes as the market continues to grow, and that it might be a good way to stimulate interest and engagement in river district.

Downtown Master Plan

Judy Daniel, Planning Director, gave the update. The Planning department anticipates presenting a matrix for implementation of the plan by the end of the summer. They are also preparing a third set of changes to the UDO responding to the current economic conditions.

One Stop Shop

Gary Jackson, City Manager, gave the update. The timeline as it stands now is for staff to be in place by the last week of August, with a soft opening of the One Stop Shop in September.

3. Unfinished Business

RFP

Sam Powers, Economic Development Director, gave the update. Mr. Powers handed out a brief summary of pieces of correspondence with the Basilica to help clarify the discussions with them on the public space. He elaborated that staff was following existing policy direction from Council. Staff suggests that at this point it would be informative for Council and the community to develop some modeling for the project, and are working in conjunction with RENC1 to develop these models. Four design scenarios have been identified: 1) massing based on the current UDO; 2) massing in accordance with the new Downtown Master Plan design guidelines; 3) massing currently proposed by McKibbon; 4) massing incorporating public space made possible by partnering with the Basilica and a realigned Page Avenue. The Committee supported the modeling as a way to build public knowledge of the facts of the project.

Chair Cape reiterated her position that the Haywood Street property was a strategic piece of city-owned property, and, as such, Council had extra responsibility for the decision-making process of what to put on the property. Mr. Oast, City Attorney, responded that Council had the ability to set the parameters for what is built on the property as a condition of the sale of the land.

51 Biltmore

Cathy Ball, Engineering Director, gave the report. The project is moving forward as expected; the design is complete and the permits have been applied for. The design consists of 410 parking spaces, 4 electric car spaces, 10 bicycle lockers, a public art component and public restrooms. Staff is working on procuring temporary parking for those parking spaces eliminated during the construction process.

The next step is to bring to Council on June 23 a request to renew the six-month agreement with McKibbon, which expires July 1, as the McKibbon Hotel Group continues to work to secure financing for the project. This agreement can be renewed for up to two six-month periods. The agreement can actually be extended by the City Manager, but since there are policy implications, staff is bringing the request to the full Council.

4. Presentations and Public Comment

There were no presentations or public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.